



Today's Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos

Liturgical Guide for Sunday, August 15, 2021



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

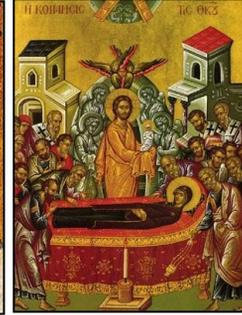
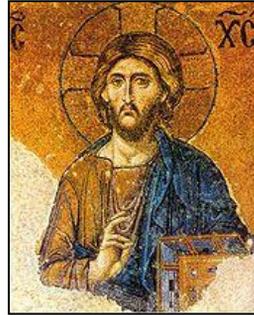
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St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church



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Very Rev. Fr. George J. Tsahakis, *Chancellor*

Liturgical Guide for Sunday, August 15, 2021

Feast of the Dormition of our Most Holy, Glorious Lady and Blessed Theotokos & Ever Virgin Mary

We remember the “falling asleep” (koimissis/dormition) – the death of the Virgin Mary. We will continue to sing the hymns for this Feast Day through August 23rd. May the prayers of the Theotokos to her Son and our Lord for us bring peace, unity, and love in every aspect of our lives. Through her intercessions O Good and Loving God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.

Thank You for Your Understanding

We welcome our parishioners who are attending services in person today and we also welcome those who are viewing our online video streaming at home. Let us comply with the guidelines we have provided everyone. We appreciate

your kind understanding in following them. Fr. George is deeply appreciative to you and all who are assisting during worship services.

Please consider that only baptized and chrismated Orthodox Christians in canonical good standing may approach for Holy Communion. All are invited to partake of the Antidoron ("instead of the gifts") distributed at the conclusion of today's Divine Liturgy.

SPECIAL HYMNS SUNG BEFORE/AFTER SMALL ENTRANCE

1./3. Hymn for the Falling Asleep of the Theotokos – (Hymnal-pp.222-223):

It is sung before and after the Small Entrance. In giving birth you remained a virgin, and in your dormition you did not forsake this world, O Theotokos. For as the Mother of Life, you have yourself passed into life. And by your prayers, you deliver our souls from death.

2. Resurrectional Hymn (Grave Tone) – (Hymnal-pp.122-125):

It is sung before and after the Small Entrance: By Your Cross, O Lord, You destroyed death; to the thief You opened paradise. The myrrhbearers' sorrow You transformed into joy, and You sent Your apostles forth to proclaim that You had risen from the dead, Christ our God, bestowing on all the world Your great mercy.

4. Kontakion for Falling Asleep of the Theotokos – (Hymnal-pp.288-289):

It is sung after the Small Entrance. She is our vigilant intercessor, the Theotokos, our sure hope and protection. Neither death nor tomb held any power over her, for as the Mother of Life, she was taken into life by that very one who deigned to dwell in her ever-virgin womb.

5. Megalynarion (Hymn to the Theotokos) – (not in New Hymnal):

On the occasion of today's feast, the following hymn is sung instead of "Axion Estin" or "Truly bless you, the only Mother of God. Now all generations call you blessed, O only Theotokos. In you the laws of nature are defeated, O undefiled Virgin pure. In virginity childbirth was accomplished, and death

introduces life. You, after bearing, are virgin, and after dying are living. Mother of God, ever save your inheritance.

6. Communion Hymn – (Hymnal-pp.324):

On the occasion of today's feast, the following hymn is sung instead of "Aineite" or "Praise the Lord": "I will lift the cup of salvation and call on the Name of the Lord. (Ps. 115[116]). Alleluia."

SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES FROM TODAY'S ORTHROS & DIVINE LITURGY

The Scriptures were not given us for this only, that we might have them in books, but

Gospel Reading During Orthros Service (Luke 1:39-49, 56)

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of His servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is His name. And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

Epistle Reading (Philippians 2:5-11)

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, Who, though He was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be

exploited, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death — even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted Him and gave Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Gospel Reading (Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28)

Now as they went on their way, He entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what He was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to Him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her." While He was saying this, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts that nursed You!" But He said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it!"

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSE (TRY TO COMMIT TO MEMORY):

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:2)

PASTORAL REFLECTION FROM FR. GEORGE:

The *bread* you do not use is the bread of the HUNGRY.

The *garment* hanging in your wardrobe is the garment of the person who is NAKED.

The *shoes* you do not wear are shoes of the one who is BAREFOOT.

The *money* you keep locked away is the money of the POOR.

The acts of *charity* you do not perform are the INJUSTICES YOU COMMIT.

- *St. Basil the Great*

“History of the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos”

(continued from Back Cover of Liturgical Guide)

For three days a choir of Angels continued to sing above Her tomb. After the third day, when finally, Saint Thomas arrived, (he had been absent and desired to venerate the body that had borne Christ God), they (the Apostles) opened the tomb and found no trace of her blessed body. Thus, taking the winding sheets, which were filled with

fragrance, the Apostles closed the tomb. Wondering at this mystery, they could only think that He, Whom it had pleased to be born of her in the flesh, the Lord of Glory, desired that after her departure from this life, her immaculate and all-pure body would be honored by incorruptibility, being translated (to heaven) before the universal resurrection of the dead” (cf. Cyril of Scythopolis, *The History of St. Euthymius III*, 40, written about 515).

On July 2, the Orthodox Church commemorates the Deposition of the Honorable Robe of the Theotokos at Blachernae. It seems that, instead of the holy relics requested, the imperial city had received Mary’s vestments which were found in Nazareth and brought to Constantinople in 474, i.e. after the death of Juvenal and Pulcheria.

The solemn celebration of the Feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God was extended to the entire East during the sixth century. Since the feast was celebrated on different days, it was decreed by Emperor Maurice (582-602) that, in the entire Roman Empire, the feast will be celebrated on August 15 under the name of Dormition (Gr. "Koimeseos"; Old Slav. "Uspenije") which, literally translated, means "the falling asleep" (cf. I Thess. 4:14) Saint Modestos of Jerusalem (d. 634), to whom the oldest extant homily of the Feast of the Dormition is ascribed, fully accepted the Jerusalem tradition concerning Mary’s wondrous dormition and metastasis of her purest body to heaven. (cf. Migne, *P.G.* 86, 3277 ff.)

In the middle of the seventh century, the Feast of the Dormition was introduced in Rome from where it gradually spread to the entire West. However, at the end of the eighth century, the Western Church changed the name of the feast to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven.

In the East, the celebration of the feast was enhanced by the famous homilies of Saint Andrew of Crete (d. about 720) , Saint Germanos of Constantinople (d. 733) and especially Saint John of Damascus (d. 749), who became the main champion of the traditional belief in the bodily metastasis of Mary.

According to the testimony of Saint John of Damascus, the tomb, which harbored the purest body of the Mother of God for only a short time, became an object of public veneration and the source of numerous miracles and special graces. (cf. Hom. on Dorm. I, 13). In the homily he delivered at the Basilica of the Dormition in Jerusalem,

he pointed to Mary's tomb and said: "Her immaculate body was placed here, in this renowned and all-glorious tomb, from whence after three days it was taken up to the heavenly mansion" (cf. Hom. on Dorm. 11,14).

The liturgical hymns extolling the wonderful Dormition of the Theotokos, for the most part, were composed during the eighth and ninth centuries by such renowned hymnographers as Saint Germanos of Constantinople (d. 733), Saint John of Damascus (d. 749), Saint Kosmas of Maiuma (d. 760), St. Theophanes the Graptos (d. 845) and others.

The Feast of the Dormition is one of the Twelve Major Feasts of the Orthodox Church and is celebrated with uncommon solemnity. In preparation for the feast, a two weeks period of fasting is prescribed for the faithful, called the Fast of the Dormition, which begins on the first day of August. Historically, the Dormition Fast can be traced to the ninth century (though there was a fast around this time centuries earlier in some places; see for example "On the Three Fasts" by Saint Anastasios of Sinai who died in 700) but it was officially introduced into the Orthodox Church discipline by the Synod of Constantinople in 1166.

Liturgically speaking, the Dormition has one day of pre-festivity and eight days of post-festivity (the octave), which are festively celebrated by Orthodox, especially in Greece. In some shrines dedicated to the Theotokos, Lamentations are chanted over a decorated epitaphios and kouvouklion the night before her feast.

According to an old custom, flowers and medicinal herbs are blessed after the Divine Liturgy on the Feast of the Dormition. This custom most probably originated from the traditional belief that after Mary's glorious metastasis into heaven, her holy tomb was filled with a "heavenly fragrance" and flowers (cf. St. Germanos, I Hom. on Dorm.). The herbs, used by people as a natural medicine, are blessed in commemoration of the numerous healings and extraordinary graces bestowed on the pilgrims at Mary's tomb (cf. St. John Damascene, Hom. on Dorm. I, 13). The blessing of the herbs on the Feast of Dormition was introduced by the Fathers to combat the superstitious incantations and charlatanism among the people.

Preaching at the tomb of Mary, Saint John of Damascus reminded the people that: "Divine power is not circumscribed by any place and neither is the inexhaustible

goodness of the Mother of God. For if the graces were restricted only to her tomb, only a few people would gain them. Now her graces are poured out in every place throughout the world” (cf. Hom. on Dorm. II, 19).

In his Homily on the Dormition, Saint John of Damascus gives a voice to the Tomb of Mary:

“Why do you seek in the tomb what has been assumed into heaven? Why do you exact from me an account of her dissolution? I had no power to go against the divine command. Leaving the winding sheet, that holy and sacred body, which filled me with myrrh, sweet fragrance and holiness, has been caught up and has departed with all the powers of heaven accompanying it.

Now the Angels keep watch over me. Now divine grace dwells in me. I have become a well of healing for the sick, a defense against demons, a refuge to those who flee to me. Draw near in faith, you people, and you will receive grace in streams” (cf. Hom. on Dorm. II, 17).

YOUTH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES CONTINUE TODAY

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Class Location</u>
3 yrs.- Kindergarten	Susan Kleto & Jackie Sarantis	Kindergarten Room
1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd Grades	Presbytera Marinda Tsahakis & Jeannie McGee	Upstairs Classroom
4 th , 5 th , 6 th Grades	Becky Butler assisted by Angelique Soulakos	Bookstore Room
7 th , 8 th , High School	Katie Wilson and Charles Costas	Conference Room
Adults Class	Fr. George Tsahakis	Church Nave



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On this the 869th Sunday of our St. Christopher's parish community, we continue to thank each of you for your presence and support. Although it may seem like we are just a handful of men, women, and children, if we commit ourselves to serving our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we will experience the miracle of growth as the Holy Spirit brings others into His service to help us build His new church in the Peachtree City, Georgia area for the glory of God!

 ["Follow" & Like"](#) our Facebook page. Check for updates and photos.

COMMUNITY SCHEDULE (CHECK WEB CALENDAR FOR MORE...)

Sunday, August 15 (Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos):

7:45 am Orthros Service
9:00 am Divine Liturgy
10:45 am Religious Education Classes for All Ages
11:45 am Philoptochos General Assembly

Your continued support and mutual encouragement are essential and appreciated!



All Sundays in August:



Wellspring Living



Wellspring Living transforms the lives of girls and boys 12-17 and young women 18-32 in our area, who are at risk, or are victimized by sexual exploitation. Headquartered in Atlanta, the non-profit organization provides restorative services through residential and community-based programs since 2001.



One of the Wellspring Living retail stores is in Peachtree City at 116 Peachtree East Shopping Center on Hwy 54 near Publix.

Hands of Love - a ministry of our [Philoptochos Society](#) will be accepting monetary donations during August. You can donate online by clicking here: stchristopherphiloptochos.square.site

You may include a [note of encouragement](#) with your donation. For Wellspring Living upcoming events or to volunteer: <https://wellspringliving.org>

Faithfully,
Anna Andreeva Naydenova, Hands of Love Chair

On the 15th of August, we commemorate the Dormition of the Theotokos. The icon featured on the cover was donated and decorated by Kirk and Dedee Panayis in honor of his mother, Maria. The “History of the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos” that follows is reprinted from www.johnsanidopoulos.com. +Fr. George Tsahakis

The origin of the feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos is closely connected with her public veneration since the beginning of the fourth century. It developed from the early celebration of Christmas in which the Theotokos, the Mother of God our Savior, played an important role. The solemn proclamation of Mary as “the Theotokos” at the Third Ecumenical Synod of Ephesus in 431 greatly enhanced her public veneration as the “Mother of God.” This is evidenced by the fact that a few years later her divine maternity was celebrated in Jerusalem as the Feast of Mary, the Mother of God, on August 15. (cf. Armenian Lectionary, 434 A.D.)

In Egypt, the same Feast of Mary was celebrated on January 18 under the influence of Saint Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444) who presided at the Synod of Ephesus. In Constantinople, the veneration of “Mary’s divine motherhood” was promoted by Saint Anatolios (d. 458), who also composed some of the first liturgical hymns in honor of the Theotokos.

At the beginning of the sixth century, a magnificent basilica was erected over the tomb of the Virgin Mary in Gethsemane. With this, the feast of Mary celebrated on August 15 took on a new meaning and became the solemn celebration of Mary’s death and metastasis into heaven under the name of the Feast of the Dormition.

In Constantinople, the Empress Saint Pulcheria (d. 453) promoted devotion to the Theotokos and built three churches in her honor. Being present at the sixth session of the Fourth Ecumenical Synod of Chalcedon in 451, she asked Saint Juvenal of Jerusalem (d. 458) for some relics of the Mother of God to be enshrined in the Church of the Theotokos at Blachernae, near Constantinople.

The holy Bishop replied: “We have received from ancient and the most reliable tradition that at the time of the glorious dormition (falling asleep) of the Mother of God, the whole company of the Apostles were brought together in Jerusalem. So, amid divine and heavenly praises, they commended her holy soul to the hands of God and, taking her God-conceiving body, they carried it in procession to Gethsemane and there placed it in a little tomb. – *Continued inside Liturgical Guide*